decided that NREGA would be initially implemented in 200 districts. With the implementation of NREGA, the existing schemes for employment generation, i.e. Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) would be subsumed in the NREGA. Mid-day Meal Scheme has been universalized at primary level w.e.f. 1st September, 2004. All the States are implementing Mid-day Meals at primary level. The target is to reduce drop out rates at primary level by 5 percentage points or increase retention by 1.5 million per annum.

Double digit growth rate

3304. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether in an address at the Indian Economic Summit held during the last week of November, 2005, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission is reported to have observed that double digit growth was not possible in India because of the constraints of coalitional policies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) At the Indian Economic Summit, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission was questioned whether coalition politics would not allow 10% growth. In reply the Deputy Chairman stated that we should first get to sustainable 8% growth over a period of time, which in his view was feasible with a coalition government. A 10% growth rate can be considered after 8% is achieved on a sustained basis.

(c) The growth rate target for a Five year Plan are decided by the National Development Council.

Balanced development of North-Eastern Region

3305. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether North-Eastern Region, including Sikkim despite being rich in mineral resources and forests has lagged behind from the rest of the country;